

Statement from a State Department spokesman to Axios on the Trump administration's response to China's mass detention of Uighur Muslims:

"The Chinese government continues to conduct its highly repressive campaign against Uighurs, ethnic Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and other members of Muslim minority groups through mass detentions, high-technology surveillance, and controls on expressions of cultural and religious identities.

The Trump Administration remains deeply concerned about these abuses, is committed to holding human rights violators accountable for their actions, and is implementing a whole-of-government response to address these concerns. This includes strengthening U.S. diplomatic and public diplomacy efforts around the world, and conducting outreach to U.S. companies with business in Xinjiang to urge them to implement human rights safeguards, thereby ensuring their commercial activities are not contributing to China's campaign of repression.

Secretary Pompeo has repeatedly denounced China's actions, including during his March meeting with Uighur Muslims at the Department of State, and most recently during the State Department-hosted Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom, when he condemned China's policies in Xinjiang as 'one of the worst human rights crises of our time.'

The Vice President has been similarly outspoken. At the same ministerial on July 18, he characterized China's campaign as a "deliberate attempt by Beijing to strangle Uighur culture and stamp out the Muslim faith." On July 17, the President himself also personally heard from Jewher Ilham, who is the daughter of prominent Uighur scholar Ilham Tohti, who was given a life sentence in 2014.

In addition to these actions, the United States co-hosted an event earlier this year with Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom at the United Nations in Geneva to highlight the magnitude and severity of the abuses in Xinjiang, and has strongly encouraged the UN to undertake an urgent, credible response to this crisis. We continue to urge the PRC to provide unhindered and unmonitored access to Xinjiang for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

We will continue to call on China to reverse its counterproductive policies that conflate terrorism with peaceful religious and political expression, to release all those arbitrarily detained, and to cease efforts to coerce members of its Muslim minority groups residing abroad to return to China to face an uncertain fate."